

HB 253 -- STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT TAX CREDITS

SPONSOR: Berry

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Business Attraction and Retention by a vote of 9 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on Commerce by a vote of 8 to 1.

This bill authorizes a tax credit of up to \$3,000 for up to 10 years for the repayment of outstanding student loans for a Missouri employee who graduated from a qualified educational institution after April 30, 2016, with a degree in science, engineering, technology, or mathematics with a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 on a four point scale and relocates his or her residence to Missouri. The credit cannot be refunded, carried forward or back, transferred, sold, or assigned.

The bill authorizes a tax credit of up to \$5,000 for up to six years for the repayment of outstanding student loans for a Missouri resident who graduated from a qualified educational institution after April 30, 2016, with a degree in science, engineering, technology, or mathematics with a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 on a four point scale. The credit cannot be refunded, carried forward or back, transferred, sold, or assigned.

The provisions of the bill will expire six years from the effective date.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill promotes the STEM industry and will increase the number of STEM students and STEM employees in Missouri. The bill will encourage STEM graduates to stay in Missouri. Supporters say that 17% of all available jobs in Missouri are STEM jobs, and almost all STEM jobs require education beyond a high school diploma. STEM education costs are higher than other majors because of lab fees, lab equipment, and other additional college expenses associated with the STEM industry.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Berry; Ann Brand, Missouri Community College Association; Missouri Biotechnology Association; Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Harrison Keir McIntosh; David Steward, World Wide Technology; Independent Colleges and Universities of Missouri; Kansas City Missouri; Associated Industries of Missouri; Paul Wagner, Council on Public Higher Education; Stevie Sieren; Sydney Scholes; Katie Allgaier; Renan Troy; Microsoft Corporation; Jacqueline Stock; Jacob Varnell; and Joseph Fharz.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.